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THE CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.

THE GRAFTON FAMILY.

CHAPTER V.—ACCLIMATION.

WRITERS on emigration tell us that even the most vigorous among new settlers, in some countries essentially healthy, rarely escape that trial of con-

No. 89, 1853.

stitution which prostrates at once physical and mental energy, but which adapts the sufferers thereafter to the climate of their new home. Some, indeed, sink under this process of *acclimation*, and in general it is a painfully critical era in emigrant

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life. A similar trial awaits those upon whom the keen and vigorous blasts of sorrow and disappointment have been suffered to blow. Who that has lived long enough in the world to know that "man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward" but has felt this sinking of spirit and prostration of energy, bodily and mentally, before they have been acclimated to the new circumstances in which God, in his providence, has placed them?—when the strong can no longer boast of their strength, nor the wise of their wisdom, but when a sickeningague of recklessness, despair, and desolation urges them to exclaim, "It is better for me to die than to live?"

We have done scant justice to Mrs. Grafton in a former chapter. While her husband was yet alive, though visibly, even to her, sinking rapidly into death, she bore up bravely under the pressure of present and anticipated evil. But the time of reaction came, when every hope seemed to be buried in her husband's grave, and even the voice of maternal affection was faintly heard. In proportion to her former strength was then her weakness; "the grasshopper was a burden," and peevish fretfulness gained a miserable ascendancy. Under the influence of this distemper of mind, the whole world seemed to her disordered fancy to be intent upon her degradation and destruction. The partners of her husband were tyrannous and malignant; her friend Mr. Nelson was cold-hearted and unfeeling; her children were tiresome; her landlady was insolent and neglectful; her former acquaintances were exultant at her downfall. All things and persons, in fact, were seen through a distorted medium. Doubtless, there is in the world selfishness enough—and more than enough—and indifference to distress which does not touch ourselves. It is quite instructive to note how sensibly we—that is, the world in general—can preach to any afflicted brother or sister the duty of resignation, and the wisdom of making efforts, and so forth. But, after all, the world is not so bad a world that sympathy is quite banished; and our friend Mrs. Grafton was not altogether the outcast object she morbidly imagined herself to be.

The worst of it is, that kindness and consideration do not always go together, or, at any rate, that the help and advice we incline to give is often just that which is least desired. For instance, there was the speedy breaking up of Mrs. Grafton's establishment, and the dispersion of her household goods—we had nearly written "household gods." Doubtless this was needful enough; but the way in which the senior partner and Mr. C. urged its necessity, and pressed it to its accomplishment, was anything but soothing to the poor widow. There was, again, the sending Bertie to school; as far as it went, it was kind perhaps; but then, to allow the mother no voice in the matter, no choice in the boy's destination and time of leaving home—this seemed to be insulting to the mother's understanding as well as reflective on her helplessness and poverty. There was, also, the expressed intention of the partners to take Bertie into their establishment when his school-days were over: but this was without reference to his own inclinations, or deference to his mother's intentions or thoughts; and this, in her estimation, was arbi-

trary. It was liberal, certainly, in the senior partner to make her a present of twenty pounds, as he did by the hands of Mr. Nelson; but it was a sort of undisguised and vulgar charity, coupled also with what she judged to be coarse and unfeeling dictation as to her own private affairs which embittered the gift, acceptable as it might otherwise have been. Even Mr. Nelson's disinterested kindness, though it relieved the afflicted lady of what would have been a burdensome duty, appeared to her something like uncalled-for interference; and though it was at her request he had sought out for her the lodgings at the "Grove," she entered them prepared to dislike them. His advice, too—and what could he advise but humble confidence in the widow's Friend, combined with energetic effort?—seemed almost harsh. It is easy enough, she might have thought, to sit in a comfortable study, and write such a letter as this; but does he suppose I have no sensibility? And to tell me how much relief I should obtain by self-exertion! How am I to exert myself? how? But we will not dwell longer on this state of feeling; nor should we have cared to expose it at all—for sorrow, real sorrow, in all its phases, is sacred—but for the sake of some grief-stricken one, who, in turning to this page, may see that no strange thing has happened, or is happening, in the heart-sickness which follows hard upon the wreck of her earthly joys. We turn now to another chapter in our history.

Bertie had left home a week or two ago for the "Academie Institution;" Mrs. Davis had relented towards her poor nervous lodger, had withdrawn her angry notice to quit, had scolded her maid-of-all-work, and banished her canary to the remotest region of her queensom, where, if he piped his heart out, she said, Mrs. Grafton wouldn't be disturbed by his noise. Poor lady! no wonder she was a little fidgetty, considering; and she, the speaker, wouldn't be the one to set up a bird, though it was her own darling pet, against a Christian and a widow: she knew what it was to be a widow, she said, and she hoped she was a Christian too; if she wasn't, she ought to be.

Mrs. Grafton had also received a visit from the man of business, who had managed her affairs and brought them to a close. It was a disheartening close. A few score pounds, besides the plain and necessary furniture of three small rooms, which had been providently secured from the house-wreck by Mr. Nelson, was all that remained from the proceeds of the sale after the payment of private debts. This was the entire fortune of one who for years had known of straitened circumstances only by report; the income of two months of her former prosperity exceeded it in amount.

We have said that this was disheartening; but almost anything is better than uncertainty. Mrs. Grafton's energies had been weakened by long disuse, but they were not destroyed; and, now that she knew the worst, her very exigencies roused her to exertion. It may be that the acclimating fever of mind had attained its crisis, and taken a favourable turn; and it may be also that He who gives power to the faint, and increases strength to them that have no might, was not far off, and that, therefore, a change, marvellous to witness, was wrought in the otherwise desolate one. The

hideous nightmare of indolent grief passed away ; and if the waking thoughts were sad, they were, at least, coherent.

"DAILY GOVERNESS"—thus ran an advertisement in a morning paper:—"A lady wishes to engage a Daily Governess to give instructions to three little girls, in the ordinary courses of a sound English education, together with French, Italian, and the rudiments of Latin; lineal, perspective, and water-colour drawing; instrumental music and singing; and the elements of general practical science. Lady-like manners and an amiable disposition are a *sine quâ non*; and satisfactory references will be required. Terms, for three hours a day, ten shillings a week. Application to be made, personally, to Mrs. Blanque, Blank House, Blank-row, Islington."

Ten shillings a week; twenty-pence a day; six-pence three-farthings (nearly) an hour; and to earn this wage of service, it was needful to have devoted years to pains-taking study, to have moved in what is generally called good society, to have talent not only for acquiring but for communicating knowledge, to have tutored the mind to patient forbearance and endurance, and, to crown all, to be the fortunate owner of "a good character."

In the same morning paper, and in close proximity with the above advertisement, might perhaps have been seen a spirited eulogium on the extraordinary merits of a young lady who had received the beggarly salary of a hundred guineas a month only, and had therefore thrown up her engagement in disgust; but *she* was not a daily governess. Let this pass, however; it was not Mrs. Blanque, of Blank House, alone who considered sixteenpence three-farthings (nearly) an hour to be a liberal remuneration for the services of any lady whose only qualifications were extensive knowledge, moral excellence, and aptitude to teach little girls.

Mrs. Blanque's advertisement was not repeated; there was no need for this. It is not within the range of our limited knowledge to say how many eager eyes were fastened on it, nor how many delicate footsteps of the young and the middle-aged, the timid and the confident, turned, during the ensuing week, to the hall-door of Blank House as to the haven of hope; suffice it to say, the number was so great that Mrs. Blanque's house-maid declared, that if things were to go on so much longer she should leave her place, for she could do nothing all day long for answering that everlasting bell. The perturbation came to an end at last, however; Mrs. Blanque was "suited" with a daily governess for her three little girls; and the eager eyes had to turn to other advertisements.

Mrs. Blanque was "suited." Let us abstract a letter from Bertie's desk at the "Academic Institution"—one of his treasured letters—and divulge its contents. It is from his sister.

"My dear brother Bertie—Mamma tells me I am to write to you to-day, for she is so busy she has no time, and she says you will be looking for a letter to-morrow. I dare say you will, for though you have not been away two months, yet it seems like a whole year to us, and it must to you, I am sure. I am to tell you that mamma goes every day now to teach three little girls; their name is

Blanque, and they live in one of the great houses in Blank-row, a mile from where we live. She goes away directly after breakfast, and does not come home till one o'clock, and that is our dinner-time now. While she is gone we have our lessons to learn, and mamma hears us in the afternoon; and then, after that, when the weather is fine, we go for a nice walk, and if mamma is not too busy or too tired, she goes with us, and we do enjoy it so, only we wish you were at home. This letter is my lesson this morning; but mamma says I can put what I like in it, and she will not look at it unless I like. I don't know yet whether I shall like her to see it or not.

"We are a good deal happier now than we used to be a little while ago, because mamma is not so sad. Do you know that, before she was married to our dear, dear papa, she was a governess. I never knew it till a few days ago. And she says she does not mind being a governess again, and is glad to be able to do something to keep us from want. But only to think, Bertie, that she should be brought to this now, after being a lady so long. And I don't think it is much she gets, for she says we must be very saving of every penny; and that is not as it used to be, you know. I wish I could do something to earn some money to help poor mamma; and perhaps I may some day. I mean to try.

"But I cannot tell you how much happier dear mamma is than she was at first; and she says that her walks every day make her stronger too. Mamma does not say so, but I think Mrs. Blanque is a proud sort of lady; for one evening, when we were going for a walk, we met her, and she did not stop to speak to mamma, only she made a kind of a little bow, as much as to say, 'Yes, I see you; but I am not going to take any notice of you—you are only a governess.' Mamma did not mind it, though; and she says the little girls are very good, and quick at learning.

"This is a long letter; but I have got so much to say, that I am afraid I shall not have room. Mamma is always busy now, when she is at home. You know how nicely she draws and paints; and she says she is so glad of this, for she has found out where to sell such things, and this helps to keep us. I must tell you, too, that Mrs. Davis is not near so cross as she used to be, and she put the canary where it would not disturb mamma; but, yesterday, mamma asked her to take the poor bird back again, for she did not think she should mind the noise any more, and you cannot think how pleased Mrs. Davis was.

"We don't have anybody to see us now; and mamma is glad of this, for she says it would only hinder her. But we hope you will come and see us. The leaves are beginning to fall off the trees before our window, and we are glad of that, because it tells us that Christmas is coming, when you will be at home again. Now you see I have filled up all my paper, and have written a long letter, so I must say good-bye. Harry sends his love and a kiss, and so does—LOTTE."

Christmas came, and Bertie with it. It was not a very merry Christmas: there were too many saddening remembrances for *that*. But neither was it a very gloomy Christmas. There was much to talk about, and something to hope for. Even

Bertie tried to forget his school troubles and mortifications, and did not attempt to darken his mother's pleasant anticipations of better times to come, when her boy, treading in the steps of his father, would advance, step by step, and regain for himself and his sisters their lost prosperity. Who could tell but he might become a partner in the firm, as his father had been before him? Stranger things than that were coming to pass every day. All he had to do would be to try hard and work hard, and bear present inconveniences, and make himself so useful in all sorts of ways as that they could not do without him.

"But, mother," said Bertie, "I am not there yet. I suppose I am to go to school again. I wish that was over."

And then came another motherly exhortation to patient industry, and the oft-repeated fallacy which somehow has gained a footing among other fallacies, that "school-days are the happiest days," and so forth. And Bertie did not contradict it. It would have been a heavy bribe to have tempted him to say how miserable a place school had lately been to him.

No, it was not a very wretched Christmas to the Graftons, for it brought friendly tokens with it. There was the nice little plump turkey (carriage paid) all the way from Mr. Nelson's quiet parsonage in the country, and the pleasant, cheerful letter which accompanied it; and there was the box of oranges from the senior partner, without the letter; and there was the rich plum-cake from Mrs. Blanque, which greatly altered Lotté's opinion of that lady, while Harry said what a good thing it was, and something remarkable as well, that the presents fitted so nicely together, and that there had not been three turkeys, or three boxes of oranges, or three plum-cakes.

So Christmas passed away, and the new year came. Bertie went back to school, and Mrs. Grafton renewed her daily walks through frost and snow, and rain and fog, and drizzle and dirt, to Blank House, Blank-row; and felt how much better that was than unavailing, paralyzing sorrow.

FLOWERS IN LONDON.

THE love of nature is not to be trodden out of the human heart by the conventional forms and usages of the world. Amid the most matter-of-fact and even repulsive aspect of business, with all its turmoils and anxieties, its annoyances and discomforts, the idea of her simple grace and loveliness will intrude and claim a place and find a welcome. The contemplation of beauty is to the millions, who perhaps are but very partially conscious of the fact, a necessity of their lives; and a very benevolent necessity it is, for more reasons than we have space to mention—and for the reason especially that it prompts every right-minded man to harmonize his own conduct with the ideal which nature exhibits, and silently admonishes him that his actions, to be beautiful, must be good and honest and true. It is impossible to say to what extent the exquisite flowers that summer sheds in profusion around our path are our friends and benefactors. They speak a language that all understand, and love to listen to—coming, like

angels of mercy, to deliver a message of peace; and dying, as we gaze upon them, to teach us how feeble and fragile are the loveliest and the brightest of all created things.

The universal love for flowers in this great metropolis is a passion that admits of no question, but the proof of which greets us daily in our walks. Even in the smoky resorts of the city, the choicest productions of the conservatory and the garden are visible, during the season, in every street and almost every house. The very back-slums and abodes of the poor are green with dusty mignonette or lanky geraniums without a blossom, lifting their tops towards the light of the sky; and if we walk into the suburbs, we find the residences of the comfortable classes brilliant with hues that are never spread on a painter's palette or on the arch of the rainbow. In this respect the aspect of modern London differs immensely from what it was a generation back. Then, the myrtle (now almost an exploded plant), a few old-fashioned geraniums, and hyacinths in coloured glasses, with here and there a ranunculus, constituted nearly the whole of the portable garden which adorned the window-sills and balconies of our sires—or rather of their better halves—for at that time of day flowers were held to be beneath the notice of gentlemen. Now, so widely has an improved taste extended, that almost every new house of any pretensions to comfort has its conservatory appended to it, and a new class, or rather many new classes, of traders and dealers in flowers have risen up to meet the growing demand for them. Walking some time ago in a fashionable district at the West End of the town, we came suddenly in front of a spectacle transcending in beauty and brilliancy all that we had ever seen or imagined in floral luxuriance. It was a family residence about sixty feet in height, and not less than thirty in width, the entire street-front of which, from the roof to the pavement, was one enormous and magnificent bouquet. From the battlements to the kitchen-window, level with the road, the whole was a monster flower-stand, crammed in every part with the finest specimens which the horticultural art could produce of the productions of all climes, all growing in pots and arranged in shelves one above another, concealing the whole of the brick-work and nearly the whole of the windows of the mansion. Their delicate odour filled the street.

The passion for flowers, of which the above remarkable demonstration is the greatest existing proof we happen to know of, betrays itself in London in a two-fold manner—by the purchase of flowers full-blown and by their home-culture. The morning markets, and Covent Garden market especially, daily supply the flowers which, sold in shops or hawked through the city and suburbs, are disposed of for personal or domestic decoration to the two million inhabitants. Some idea may be formed of the quantities used for this latter purpose, from the fact that, at a single entertainment given by an aristocratic family to their friends, twenty-five or thirty pounds is no extraordinary charge for the flowers that fill the bouquet-vases scattered through the rooms or adorning the banqueting-table. We may remark, too, that London markets supply the whole kingdom with the choicest flowers, when wanted for festive occasions. We have seen bou-

quets for wedding parties adroitly packed in tins, and sent by express trains into the heart of Scotland, at the charge of a guinea each : their stems being embedded in moist wadding, they arrive perfectly fresh after their journey, and often travel hundreds of miles after the feast is over, borne off as presents by the guests. In the immediate neighbourhood of London are grown the finest flowers of all kinds that our climate can be made to produce; and so active is speculation in this branch of commerce, that the growers will give almost any price for a new specimen—and few indeed are the rarities in the Royal Botanical Garden, which have any claims to floral beauty, which may not be bought for a price in the nurseries surrounding the capital. It is owing to this commercial value of flowers that the gardens throughout the country, both public and private, present such a different appearance to what they did thirty years ago, and are so wonderfully enriched by new treasures. When the fuchsia, now a favourite with every cottager, first came to this country—hardly more than twenty-five years back—fortunes were made by its cultivation, five guineas each being demanded and received for thriving roots, which may now be bought for sixpence. Though the rose will not flourish well very near the city, yet roses are grown by the acre at no great distance, and their leaves are sold to the chemists by the hundredweight for the extraction of the attar, the most exquisite of all odours, and the most expensive. Moss-roses are retailed in the streets in immense numbers, by women, who, in the precincts of the Inns of Court or of the Exchange, and in the more gentlemanly resorts of business, find a continual demand for them. The violet, naturally a spring flower, has been transformed by the spirit of commerce into a perennial one, and the violet-girl accosts you at all seasons of the year, even in the depth of winter, with her dark-blue posies buried in scraps of letter-paper. Wall-flowers, cabbage-roses, pinks, and carnations, etc., etc., mingled with sweet-smelling herbs, come to town in wagon-loads, and find a place in the street-markets along with the roots and vegetables of the humbler classes, and are as readily and as certainly purchased by them as the greens and turnips for the Sunday's dinner. A dealer, standing on the kerb-stone of a frequented thoroughfare, will sometimes, on a favourable Saturday, sell from three to four hundred bunches of mixed flowers at a penny a bunch.

It is no marvel that the attempt to cultivate flowers should grow out of this general partiality in their favour. In consequence of this attempt, London plays very much the part of a general cemetery for the floral race. Millions upon millions are brought here from year to year to die. So soon as winter shows signs of retreating, come the cheap spring roots—primroses, polyanthus, London-pride, and all that cottage-garden tribe so dear to the lovers of the country-side. These are cried about the town in hand-carts, and are followed soon after by flowering roots—early geraniums and rising seedlings. The travelling gardener pursues his trade throughout the summer, and is always welcome, notwithstanding the awkward fact, that—from one cause or other, partly no doubt from doctoring, to get his flowers earlier to market—his merchandise is astonishingly short-

lived. Looking to our own dealings with this worthy—for we cannot do without flowers—the residuum of ten years' commercial transactions with him resolves itself into ten plants, two dead and three dying of this year's purchase, and a hundred or so of empty pots buttressing the dust-box in the garden.

Having the disadvantage of smoke and soot to contend with, it seems strange that a dweller within the sound of Bow Bells should enter the lists against the floriculturist of the country, and compete with him for the prize at the flower-show, which occasionally comes off in the neighbourhood. Yet he does it, and, as we can testify, is often successful, as we have seen him carry off the prize more than once against all competitors. We had no idea, however, until properly instructed on the subject, of the labour and watchfulness entailed upon one who undertakes such a competition in a suburban garden of some forty feet by twenty. Our informant, who carried off a dahlia prize, did not allow himself, for the last three weeks preceding the show, to sleep more than an hour and a half at a time. Twice every three hours during the night did he descend to the garden in his night-gown, and, lantern in hand, examined every leaf and spray of the flower in training, in search of slugs or earwigs, a single nibble from either of which would have ruined his hopes. He told us, with breathless interest, that he only saved his credit at last by catching a piratical earwig in the very act of assaulting his flower as the quarters chimed half-past two that very morning. The poor fellow wrought sixteen hours a day at shoe-making, but he declared he should hardly have forgiven himself if he had allowed the earwigs to defeat him.

We look upon the growing love for flowers as an evidence that we are getting on in a morally right direction. In the "good old times," when bull-baiting was a popular sport, and badger-drawing a gentlemanly pastime, there were no popular flower-shows; and the recreations of the artisan classes were more marked by the love of cruelty than the love of nature, which flower-shows are calculated to impart. The increase of public extramural cemeteries, where flowers are always planted in profusion, and droop their beautiful petals over the dead, may be one cause why we have learned to prize them more than we did. May we prize them more and more; and may our words and deeds be flowers, and smell sweet and blossom when we are dust.

THE REMARKABLE YEAR.

UPWARDS of seventy years have elapsed since the period to which we are about to refer; and, of course, there are not at present many survivors of those who were then in being. Stragglers are here and there to be met with whose birth goes back beyond that date; but very few of these have any distinct recollection of the events of the time. It was a remarkable era. The third George had been twenty-two years upon the throne. His riotous son and successor had just completed his majority, and taken his seat in the house of lords. The reluctant acknowledgment of the independence of the United States was a very recent occurrence.

Fox and Pitt were the orators in parliament. The strange coalition between the former and lord North transpired at the epoch, while Pitt became prime minister of England, the youngest the country has ever had presiding over its interests. In addition, the first petition to the legislature on the subject of the abolition of slavery was presented by the Society of Friends. Crabbe, the poet, had secured the friendship of Burke, and was looking hopefully upon the future; Cowper was meditating the "Task" in his summer-house at Olney; Gilbert White was studying natural history in the parish of Selborne; and Dr. Johnson was smitten with paralysis, which, with other complaints, speedily brought him to the grave. We mention these incidents simply to mark the period, for not for political transactions or celebrated personages was it so remarkable as for natural phenomena, which render the year 1783 the most extraordinary, of which any knowledge has been preserved, in the history of Europe and the northern hemisphere in general. We have never met with any grouping of its events; but they deserve a chronicle, which may not be uninteresting to the reader.

Early in the year, the earthquakes occurred which desolated the two Calabrias and the parts of Sicily adjacent to the continent. They continued for upwards of three months, during which time the ground was in a state of almost constant tremor. The more violent and destructive shocks were those of February the 5th, 6th, and 27th, March 1st and 28th. Through a considerable area of the district mentioned, the entire country was laid waste, and every town and village was destroyed. The surface heaved, and then yawned in fissures, some of which immediately closed, engulfing property and persons. Hills slid into the plains; other land altered its level; vast masses of cliff fell on the coast; streams disappeared; and fresh fountains were opened. With resistless fury the sea broke upon the shore, rushing far inland and as violently retiring. The prince of Scylla and his people, fearing that the rock on which his castle and town stood might be detached, left it for the beach, and were swept away by one of these tremendous waves. At the first shock, about noon, the quay of Messina sank considerably, and the city was half ruined. At night, with a bright moon in the heavens, the scene was strikingly picturesque and mournful. Serenity and splendour aloft formed an impressive contrast with confusion and havoc beneath. The sum total of the mortality, according to returns made to the Neapolitan government, amounted to between thirty and forty thousand lives.

Upon nature resuming her wonted calmness in this district, violent disturbances from volcanic activity broke out in another quarter—the south of Iceland. The preceding winter had there been unusually mild, and nothing seemed to foretel the approaching danger till the spring months were passing away. It was towards the end of May that a light blueish fog was seen floating along the surface of the ground. This was succeeded in the beginning of June by earthquakes, which increased in intensity till the 8th of that month. At nine o'clock, on the morning of that day, numerous pillars of smoke were noticed rising in the hill-country towards the north, which, gradually

gathering into a dark band, obscured the atmosphere, and, proceeding in a southerly direction against the wind, involved the whole district of Sida in darkness, showering down sand and ashes to the thickness of an inch. This cloud continued to enlarge till the 10th, when fire-spouts were observed at a distance in the mountains; and on the 12th it was known that the Skaptar volcano was in eruption. A current of lava then burst forth, and continued to flow till July 20th. It filled up the beds of streams, consumed the vegetation, and seventeen villages were obliterated by the fiery torrent. From its length, breadth, and depth, it has been calculated that the mass of matter ejected, if spread over the coal-fields of Great Britain, would cover them with a coating of basaltic rock twenty feet thick, or produce a mountain rivalling the Peak of Teneriffe if accumulated on the site of our metropolis. This is perhaps the most enormous mass of matter ever ejected by a volcano during a single period of activity. Owing to the immense thickness of the volume of lava, it was years in cooling. Mr. Stephenson, who published an "Account of the Eruption," at Copenhagen, found it so hot, twelve months afterwards, that he could not cross it; and it was then sending up a thick smoke or steam. After the lapse of ten years, it still retained an elevated temperature, emitting vapours in various places, and many of its crevices were filled with warm water. The subterranean outbreak was not confined to the dry land, but invaded the channels of the great deep. An island was formed by the elevation of its bed, of which the king of Denmark took possession, denominating it Nyöe, or the New Island, though in the course of the following year it subsided, and the ocean resumed its former dominion on the spot. The physical convulsions, and the consequent horrors of famine, are stated to have destroyed, in the space of two years, 9336 human beings, 28,000 horses, 11,461 head of cattle, and 190,488 sheep.

Coincidently, dry fog appeared—a far more extensive and inexplicable, though comparatively harmless, phenomenon. It was observed over the whole of Europe, from Sweden to the north of Africa, and over a great part of northern Asia and America. It was first seen at Copenhagen, May 29th, after a succession of fine days; in other places it was preceded by a gale, and in England by continuous rains. At La Rochelle, the fog was noticed on June 6th and 7th; at Dijon, on the 14th; and almost everywhere in Germany, France, and Italy, from the 16th to the 18th. On the 19th it was seen at Franecker and in the Pays-Bas; on the 22nd, at Spyberg in Norway; on the 23rd, at St. Gothard and at Buda; on the 24th, at Stockholm; the 25th, at Moscow; towards the end of June, in Syria; and the 1st of July, in the Altai mountains. This misty veil continued nearly a month, obscuring the light of sun, moon, and stars, and giving to universal nature "a dim and sickly eye." The air of the lower regions did not appear to be its vehicle, for at certain points it came with a north wind and at others with east and south winds. Travellers found it on the highest summits of the Alps. Abundant rains and the strongest breezes did not dissipate it. Its density was in some places so great, that the sun was not visible in the morning till at the height

of twelve degrees above the horizon. During the rest of the day the solar orb appeared red, and the eye could readily encounter his beams in the meridian. The smoke, as some meteorologists called it, was accompanied with a disagreeable odour. Its most distinguishing property from ordinary fogs, which are generally very damp, was its dryness. Finally, it seemed to be endowed with a kind of phosphorescent virtue, or inherent light; for, according to many observers, it shed a lustre even at midnight, which they compared to the light of the moon at full; and it was new moon at the period of observation.

Cowper, writing from Olney, June 13th, thus refers to the condition of the atmosphere:—"The sun continues to rise and set without his rays, and hardly shines at noon, even in a cloudless sky. At eleven last night the moon was a dull red; she was nearly at her highest elevation, and had the colour of heated brick. She would naturally, I know, have such an appearance looking through a misty atmosphere; but that such an atmosphere should obtain for so long a time, and in a country where it has not happened, in my remembrance, even in winter, is rather remarkable." In another letter, June 29th, he states:—"We never see the sun but shorn of his beams. The trees are scarcely discernible at a mile's distance. He sets with the face of a red-hot salamander, and rises (as I learn from report) with the same complexion. Such a phenomenon at the end of June has occasioned much speculation among the *connoscenti* at this place. Some fear to go to bed, expecting an earthquake; some declare that he neither rises nor sets where he did, and assert with great confidence that the day of judgment is at hand." Gilbert White remarks:—"By my journal I find that I had noticed this strange occurrence from June 23 to July 20 inclusive, during which period the wind varied to every quarter, without making any alteration in the air. The sun, at noon, looked as blank as a clouded moon, and shed a rust-coloured ferruginous light on the ground and floors of rooms, but was particularly lurid and blood-coloured at rising and setting." He also mentions the superstitious fears of the country people at the extraordinary aspect of the sky, as ominous of some great natural catastrophe. Similar apprehensions were largely shared by the Parisians. To quiet them, Lalande, the astronomer, addressed a letter to one of the public journals, in which he attributed the fog to the quantity of electricity developed during a very hot summer, succeeding to a moist winter. Others supposed, and the impression was pretty common, that our planet was entangled in the tail of a comet. A third surmise was, that the obscuration was simply the smoke projected into the air by the Icelandic volcanoes, which the winds dispersed through the atmosphere. In addition to this cause, considering the great physical commotions at two opposite points, it is not improbable that gaseous vapours, of an unknown nature, might proceed from the bowels of the earth, through the numerous fissures in its solid covering, producing the general dimness.

Heavy showers and electric storms were common in England while the fog prevailed. "We have had," says Cowper, "more thunder-storms than have consisted well with the peace of the fearful

maiden in Olney; though not so many as have happened in places not far distant, nor so violent." Gilbert White records the exemption of Selborne from storms, while the whole of the surrounding country was continually harassed with them.

The heat at times was intense. Butchers' meat could hardly be kept a single day. Wasps appeared in myriads. Flies swarmed in the lanes and hedges, rendering the horses half frantic, and riding irksome. "Honey-dews," says White, "were so frequent as to deface and destroy the beauties of my garden. My honeysuckles, which were one week the loveliest objects that eye could behold, became the next the most loathsome, being enveloped in a viscous substance, and loaded with black *aphides*, or smother-flies."

August came, and brought with it entirely different phenomena. On the 18th, at sixteen minutes past nine in the evening, one of the largest and most brilliant meteors appeared, travelling the atmosphere with immense velocity, and illuminating all objects to a surprising degree. It came from the direction of the northern ocean, for it was seen in the Shetlands, and passed over Scotland, where it was observed by general Murray at Athol House, as nearly vertical as he could judge. It proceeded a little westward of the zenith of Perth and eastward of Edinburgh, over the western parts of Northumberland and Durham, through the middle of Yorkshire, and then deviating to the eastward, traversed Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, and Essex. It crossed the channel between Ostend and Calais, was seen from Brussels and Paris, and still holding on its course to the southward, described a track of at least a thousand miles over the surface of the earth. The meteor was first noticed as a luminous ball, as large as the moon, but infinitely more brilliant. Disrupting on its progress, it seemed to cast off successive sheaths of fire, and scatter lesser meteors—an appearance caused by the combustion of the separated parts. The longest period of visibility scarcely exceeded a minute. Herschel, one of the observers, watched it at Windsor for from forty to forty-five seconds. Its height was estimated at fifty miles, and its velocity at more than twenty miles a second. Crabbe, another eye-witness, was riding over a wide open common near Beccles in Suffolk, accompanied by Miss Elmy, his future wife. A dull, cloudy sky added to the gloom natural to the advanced hour of the evening. But in an instant the dark mass seemed to open just in front; the clouds were rolled back like a scroll; and the glorious phenomenon burst forth. "My mother," says the poet's son and biographer, "who happened to be riding behind, said, that even at that awful moment (for she concluded that the end of all things was at hand), she was irresistibly struck with my father's attitude. He had raised himself from his horse, lifted his arm, and spread his hand towards the object of admiration and terror, and appeared transfixed with astonishment." Another meteor appeared in the evening of October 4th, of inferior size and lustre, but remarkable for its intensely bright bluish colour.

These incidents are referred to by Cowper in his well-known "Task," a poem which was then commencing, where they serve to point an appropriate moral:—

" Since there is need of social intercourse,
Benevolence, and peace, and mutual aid,
Between the nations in a world that seems
To toll the death-bell of its own decease,
And, by the voice of all its elements,
To preach the general doom. When were the winds
Let slip with such a warrant to destroy?
When did the waves so haughtily o'erleap
Their ancient barriers, deluging the dry?
Fires from beneath, and meteors from above
Portentous, unexampled, unexplained,
Have kindled beacons in the skies; and the old
And crazy earth has had her shaking fits
More frequent, and foregone her usual rest.
Is it a time to wrangle, when the props
And pillars of our planet seem to fail,
And nature with a dim and sickly eye
To wait the close of all?"

Though the events of 1783 are not peculiar in themselves, their aggregation in the cycle is so, rendering it one of the most remarkable years of ancient or modern times.

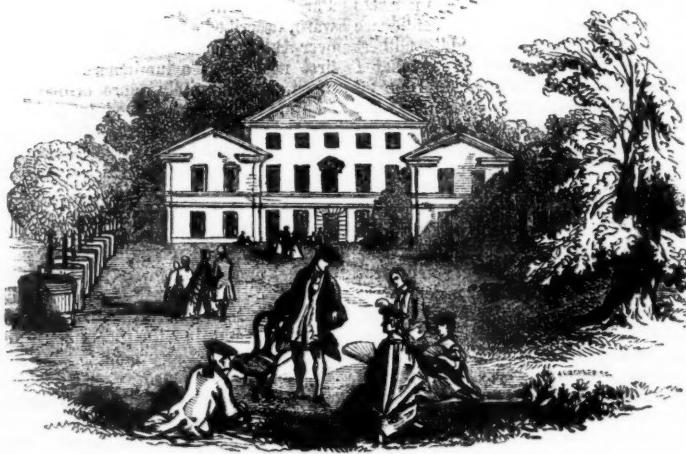
BANKS OF THE THAMES.

VI.—HAMPTON COURT.

Most courteous reader, we hope you are not so weary of our company as to be indisposed to step into our boat this fine summer's morning (no fear of such an accident as befel Mr. Pope and the lady), and proceed with us up the river to the grand old palace of Hampton. At Kew, in our former rambles,

this part of the Thames, we discover many picturesque beauties; especially do we like the look of the weir which crosses the stream just by this first lock in the river, over which the waters come rolling down like a mimic cataract, making gentle murmurs, which melodiously mingle with the song of the bird and the chirp of the grasshopper, and the occasional lowing of the oxen in yonder green fields, forming altogether, we were going to say, a picturesque concert. Before we can reach by water the palace of Hampton, whither we are bound, we must take a long circuit; for here the river winds about, so as to take us miles further than we should have to go by the road. But the river breezes and the cheerful airy banks compensate for the loss of expedition, to be gained by traversing the dusty and confined turnpikes, or even the stately drive through Bushy Park. The banks are low and the country flat from Teddington to Kingston, yet all the way the stream is pleasant. We must not linger about this town on the Surrey side, which is joined by a bridge to the opposite bank. The railway has improved it, increased the inhabitants, and stimulated a little bustle in the place, but has taken off its former quiet, old-fashioned look.

From Kingston we go up to Thames Ditton, a pleasant little retired village, with charming residences all round, and, like Teddington, a favourite place of resort for the disciples of Isaak Walton. It may be mentioned that the river Mole, after



OLD PALACE AT KEW.

we passed the site of another palatial residence, associated with many interesting reminiscences of George III and his court. That palace has now disappeared; but for this there is little matter of regret, as its meagre outline bore no resemblance to the stately pile which we are now about to visit. We embark at Teddington, that tempting name for a little etymological criticism. But we, like Dr. Syntax, are on a tour in search of the picturesque, and therefore must deliver up these dry questions into other hands. As elsewhere, on

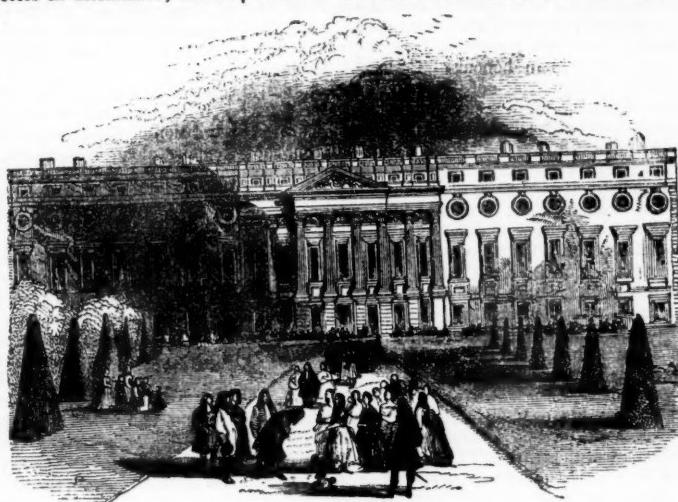
watering the county of Surrey, falls into the Thames close to Ditton. The right bank of the river, all the way from Kingston to Hampton Court Bridge, forms the boundary of the palace park, which is guarded by a wall concealing its beauties, but suggesting thoughts about the lordly domain, the extent of which it so plainly indicates. There is a pretty picture this year in the Exhibition, entitled, "King Charles in his happier Days," representing the royal barge, and the king and queen and the young princes feeding the swans, and a black

servant with a tray full of provisions, and rowers | we turn over a series of striking incidents illustrative of men and times familiar to us all. We see the back-ground the old water-gate of the palace, where men-at-arms are waiting the royal arrival. The picture helps our imagination of other days as we wind round the old wall, and come up to its termination not far from our own landing-place.

Hampton Court is a subject for descriptive, historical, antiquarian, artistic musings—indeed, pleasant and not unprofitable chitchat of all kinds. To begin with the history—for with so large a theme in hand we must preserve some order—time was when a few of the knights of St.

John had a house and chapel here, very humble, as it seems from the inventory of their goods and chattels, for the altar had only a chalice of silver, and a pix of copper, and two candlesticks of patten; the dormitory had only two chairs for the accommodation of the members, who occupied the twenty rude bedsteads; the dining-table was a board resting on tressels; the kitchen utensils consisted simply of a brass pot and caldron, a frying-pan, and salting-trough. Those half military and half ecclesiastic companions little dreamt of the magnificent palace and gorgeous scenes which were to appear on the spot, when they quitted their humble abode, upon the prior's parting with the whole manor in 1515 to Thomas Wolsey, then archbishop of York. Then began to dawn the glories of Hampton Court. In two years a palace rose fit for a monarch, as Wolsey's master saw, and soon gave his favourite to understand. Here for awhile the cardinal dwelt in princely state, with a crowd of retainers, and hedged about with all the impassable forms of etiquette that might encircle an emperor; and even when he walked in his park "he would allow no suitor to come near him, but commanded him away as far as a man will shoot an arrow." Soon the builder had to transfer his house to the capricious Henry, yet, however, continuing to use it as though he had been master still; for we read of his entertaining the French ambassador there, and of his coming into the room booted and spurred, and then, shifting his riding apparel, sitting down in his chair, and giving his guests hearty and merry welcome. After Wolsey's fall, the history of

Hampton Court as a royal palace begins, and secretary of the deceased cardinal, before him, giving an account, on his knees, of his master's



HAMPTON COURT PALACE.



COURT OF CHARLES I.

property. Then we find Henry building the great Hall, and next revelling here with his new queen, Anne Boleyn; then rejoicing over the birth of his son and heir, prince Edward, and mourning over the death of the babe's mother, Jane Seymour; then come pageants in honour of Catherine Howard; and next the marriage of Catherine Parr; and last, days of disease, when the tyrant becomes a prisoner and can no longer hunt and take his pleasure as aforetime. During the reigns of his children, the shades-royal of Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth come but indistinctly before us at grand court festivals, for no characteristic incidents in their lives are recorded in connection with this favourite residence of their father. The annals of the Stuarts are full of vivid pictures belonging to Hampton Court. Here was the famous conference over which James presided, when he considered that he achieved one of the greatest victories of his life, "peppering the puritans soundly," as he used to say. His son, when his happier days were over, had in this very place to bear the penalties of his father's despotism as well as his own. Revels and plays were the order of the day at Hampton Court during the early part of the reign of Charles I; but afterwards we have scenes of reverse, gilded however somewhat by the last rays of royal splendour. The King changed his residence to this place, and here "found himself so much at his ease, that he began to forget he had been vanquished; his house was splendidly furnished, and the services rendered to royalty were performed with the customary state; the general and other military commanders were much at court, and had frequent conferences with the king; he was surrounded with his nobility, and every one he was willing to see was without difficulty suffered to approach him." But finding himself, with all this regal magnificence, a prisoner in fact, one day Charles retired to his closet earlier than usual, before evening prayer, and there secretly made his escape, the circumstance not being ascertained till his long absence and the cries of his greyhound indicated that something had happened.

The scene changes, and Hampton Court is found in the occupation of a far different personage, Oliver Cromwell, whom we here discover sauntering up and down the long gallery, or seeking to soothe his mind, burdened by the cares of empire, by the music of the great organ, removed hither from Magdalen College, Oxford. And then, in the death-chamber of the lady Claypole, his daughter, we see him for fourteen days watching over the sufferer, and afterwards mourning over the dead. And next and last, as it regards the Protector, there occurs at the park gate the memorable interview between him and the honest quaker, George Fox, who says, "Before I came to him, as he rode at the head of his life-guard, I saw and felt a waft"—Carlyle reads it a *whiff*—"of death go forth against him." There is neither profit nor pleasure in prying into scenes of dissipation, and therefore we shall pass over the doings at Hampton Court in the days of the second Charles, after whom, and the final fall of the Stuart family, William III comes into notice as the builder of the new part of the palace, easily distinguishable from the old one of Wolsey and Henry by the French style of its architecture. In this very park the conqueror of the Boyne met with the accident

which caused his death, and hence he was conveyed to Kensington, where he died. The times of Anne and the first two Georges supply nothing of particular interest as connected with Hampton Court; all that is recorded respecting it and them being the dull routine of court etiquette, and a series of insipid and tiresome amusements.

What a contrast do we see in the real and hearty recreation of these groups of Londoners, who come trooping along from the van, the steam-boat, and the railway, and who now meet us round the old Tudor gate, the grand entrance to the palace, up to which we have sauntered, while these historical reminiscences have passed through our minds, preparing us for the inspection of the curious pile! These venerable octogenarians, leaning on their staff for very age; these staid and worthy matrons in neat attire; these artisans and others in humble life, but in holiday guise, with bright bunches of flowers in their button-holes; and these smart wives of theirs, keeping in order the young folks, who are full of boisterous glee, and are running up and down the great court-yard, their rapid evolutions presenting a contrast to the measured march of the dragoons on sentry, carbine in hand; all these, with sprinklings of genteeler folks, how right pleasant it is to see them enjoying themselves in such a place, after the confinement of London streets and alleys, filled with an atmosphere of dust and smoke; and how thoroughly do we sympathize with those who rejoice in the transformation of Hampton Court, once a palace for kings, into a palace for the people!

Let us pause for a moment at the grand entrance gate, to notice the rich oriel window projecting over the broad Tudor arch, and to mark the long vista formed by the successive gateways in the inner courts. The effect is very noble, and suggests to us the magnificent ideas of palatial architecture which builders had in the day when this palace was reared. Making a picture of it, the fitting composition for the foreground, of course, would be the proud cardinal on his mule, richly bedight with gilt and velvet trappings, ambling up to the gate with a long train of attendants behind him. Seeking a moral to attach to it, one is readily at hand in the picture of another gateway at Leicester, with the same cardinal—but now how changed! approaching the abbey—

"Where the reverend Abbot
With all his convent honourably received him,
To whom he gave these words: 'Oh, Father Abbot,
An old man broken with the storms of state
Is come to lay his weary bones among ye,
Give him a little earth for charity.'"

Passing under the gateway, one comes into the first great court-yard, and a right noble court-yard it is, with a fine character of antiquity about it, unmarred by tasteless modernizing hands, only here and there restored with a proper feeling of what is harmonious; angular towers, square windows, with mullions and transoms, and Tudor badges, and twisted chimneys, all disposed and grouped so as to carry back recollection once more to Wolsey, and to make us fancy that we see his three hundred visitors trooping all at once into this very court-yard, for whom, we are told, that silken beds were prepared in the chambers, where also were to be found ewers, and livery pots for wine

and beer, and candlesticks, every one of silver.—Pause again, to examine the chaste and graceful oriel over this second gateway and the window above, and the clock at the top, forming a rich relief upon the hall between the tall narrow towers which flank the entrance. The busts of the Roman emperors, in *terra cotta*, are said to be gifts to Wolsey from Leo the Tenth. There are some more imperial busts in the next court; but, before we enter that, we must ascend the staircase on the left hand conducting to the great hall. It is commonly called Wolsey's Hall; but, in fact, it was only designed by him: the building of this magnificent room was the work of Henry, so we must not associate it with the festive doings of the cardinal. His banqueting apartment—where there was such a dazzling display of plate, and of silver and gilt candlesticks; where, in addition to substantial viands, curious "subtleties" appeared on the board; and where there was such a goodly number of my lord's officers and tall yeomen standing about ready to serve—was in a part of the palace, we presume, that has been altered or has vanished; for, whereas there are now but three courts, there were once five. Royal banquets must be associated with this hall, and the bluff Harry must be fancied as the lord of the feast. It is a dining-room fit for a king, one hundred and six feet long, forty wide, and sixty high, with oak roof, dais, gallery, and bay-windows in old English style. The late restorations, though on the whole exceedingly good, are open to criticism on the ground of their being rather too gaudy. Less fondness for gold and colours, on the part of those who designed the decorations, would have been all the better; but probably it was thought that the gorgeous taste of the king and cardinal gave a warrant for departing somewhat beyond the bounds of what is truly chaste and elegant. The windows, on a sunny day throwing rainbow-hues upon the floor, are at all times a study for the herald, and, Mr. Cole says, for the historian also; for there are the coats of arms of Henry and his wives, with all their pedigrees, the examination of which, we are assured, will fix in the mind the remembrance of the whole line of queens, with their ancestry and offspring. We apprehend that the historical lesson is lost on most folks. Well, be that as it may, be sure to look at the old tapestry on the walls in Flemish style, representing the history of Abraham; and at the still older tapestry of the Albert Durer school, hanging at the entrance, and representing Justice and Mercy pleading before kings, with appropriate moral sentiments affixed in Latin. It is curious to recall the different purposes for which this hall has been employed since Henry, and his queens and court, used here to feast. Elizabeth and James made a theatre of it; and, what is remarkable, the play of Henry VIII., or the Fall of Wolsey, is said to have been the first acted here, and in it some have concluded that Shakspere took a part. It was afresh put to the same use in the time of George I.; and once more Wolsey's fall was exhibited on the spot associated with the scenes of his palmy pride. The theatrical fittings were not cleared away until the beginning of the present century; and in the reign of George IV., when Hampton Church was undergoing repair, this apartment was used, for about

two years, as the parish place of worship. The withdrawing-room, next to the great hall, strikes us as a more genuine antique, and we like its quiet sombre air. The ceiling, with its pendant ornaments, its *fleur-de-lis*, rose, and portcullis, tell very distinctly of Tudor times, and forms a study for architects and decorators and tasteful connoisseurs. The faded tapestry, full of allegorical designs, is very curious, having an interest for the antiquary more than the artist, though the drawing is very superior. The cartoons, in *chiaro-oscuro*, exhibit personages celebrated in heathen mythology, and were designs for the frescoes of the ducal palace of Parma. George III. purchased them, and placed them here. The first founder of the house is in this room doubly represented. A portrait of Wolsey is introduced into the painted oriel window, and in the centre of the carved oak mantelpiece is another, probably the best extant.

We come out again into the open air of the second quadrangle—a contrast to the first, inasmuch as its harmony is destroyed by the introduction of an Ionic colonnade, from a design by Sir Christopher Wren. Out of this court there is an entrance into the chapel, still used for religious worship, and rendered very gaudy by the paintings of Verrio, and other adornments. Its original character is destroyed, though it must have been always showy; for Paul Hentzer, who was here in the reign of Elizabeth, speaks of it as "most splendid, in which the queen's closet is quite transparent, having its windows of crystal." We press on to the next court—the third and last remaining. It is called the Fountain Court, and the poor little attempt in the middle, in the way of spouting out water, has come in for its full share of scorn. We English seem to be always and everywhere most unfortunate folks at fountain making. Our exhibitions in Charing-cross, and other places, are constant jests among ourselves, and excite smiles which even our polite French visitors, familiar with their Place de la Concorde, find it hard to repress. We had better abolish fountains altogether—if our timid and awkward water-jets deserve that name—unless we try something on a bolder scale, after the fashion of our continental neighbours. What the original Fountain Court was we cannot tell, but probably something grander than this, since it attracted the special attention of Paul Hentzer, who says, "the chief area is paved with stones; in its centre is a fountain that throws up water covered with a gilt crown, on the top of which is a statue of Justice, supported by columns of black and white marble." By the way, it is interesting to read the whole of the description which this observant traveller of the old time gives of his visit to Hampton Court. Very glowing is the description which he furnishes of two chambers, called the presence or chamber of audience, shining with tapestry of gold and silver, and silk of different colours, and under the canopy of state, embroidered in pearl, the words, "*Vivat Henricus Octavus.*" He mentions, too, the queen's small chapel hung with tapestry, and her bed with costly coverlets of silk; and another, of which the tester was worked by Anne Boleyn for her inhuman husband; and a third, in which Jane Seymour died and Edward VI. was born. "In one chamber," he goes on to say, "were several excessive rich tapestries, which are hung

up when the queen gives audiences to foreign ambassadors; there were numbers of cushions ornamented with gold and silver, many counterpanes and coverlids of beds lined with ermine. In short, all the walls of the palace shine with gold and silver. Here is besides a certain cabinet, called paradise, where, besides that everything glitters so with silver, gold, and jewels, as to dazzle one's eyes, there is a musical instrument made all of glass except the strings. Afterwards we were led into the gardens, which are most pleasant."

Truly they are so now, friend Hentzler; and, after prying into the earlier antiquities of the palace, loitering about dingy rooms and confined courts, it is a grateful change to come out into this fresh air, and to let the eye repose on the green leaves and flowers, and the rich waving trees, with those young roysters from London playing about, significant of times very different from those when you were permitted to inspect the palace of queen Elizabeth. We have hitherto been looking only at those parts of the palace which are of the Tudor era: we wish to preserve distinct in our thoughts the house as it was before the alterations and additions of William III, and the house as it became by what he did to it. Nor are we disposed just now, even if we had time and space, to inspect the less ancient portion of the palace, with its numerous pictures. A turn in the gardens is more to our taste; so, begging pardon for leaving you, courteous reader, rather abruptly, we would ask permission to sit down here awhile on one of the garden-seats, hoping to meet you again soon, when we will go through the state apartments, and have a look at the pictures, and then take a stroll together about the grounds.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THERE are many reasons why the name of Sir Walter Scott should occupy a position of high pre-eminence amongst those of modern British authors. It may be true, that, as a poet he has been by contemporaries equalled and surpassed: and while he is admittedly unrivalled as a writer of fiction, the mere novel, with the ephemeral character which usually and justly attaches to it, and the many objections which exist against it in the estimation of the pious-minded and right-thinking portion of the community, cannot but be an insecure foundation upon which to rest for a continuance of fame. Still, the master-mind is so impressed upon almost all which he has written; his pictures of scenery and character and manners are so generally true to nature; his tone is usually so healthful and so pure, when compared with that of other writers of his class—whom he has also far exceeded in the quantity no less than the quality of his productions—that the world, we may rest assured, will not readily permit his name, or aught with which it stands connected, to pass into oblivion. The history of his life too, the deeply interesting and instructive character which it unfolds, the many features worthy of special imitation (with some, alas! that are fraught with solemn warning) which it discloses, render it as undesirable as it is unlikely that his memory should perish, or that his name should cease to be as familiar to men's minds as for nearly half a century it has been.

Sir Walter Scott was born in Edinburgh, in the month of August, 1771. He was of an ancient Scottish family, many of whom had been distinguished in the fierce border warfare of other days. A lameness of the right leg, which lasted during his life—the consequence of an illness which occurred when he was only eighteen months old—would seem to have been rather favourable than otherwise to the nurturing of his genius, inasmuch as it threw him from early childhood upon books as his chief source of recreation, and also upon the care of relatives and domestics, who fed with the wild border ballads and traditions of Scotland the passion for romantic poetry which possessed him from his cradle. It is, however, to the fond partiality and the judicious culture of a mother, gifted with a mind of no ordinary cast, that he himself mainly attributed all that he afterwards became.

His career at school and at college was undistinguished. Ill health, and the indolence and dislike to regular systematic application, which are not unfrequently the concomitants of imaginative genius such as his, but which in after life he most energetically and completely overcame, rendered him in this respect inferior to many whom in actual ability he immeasurably surpassed; and most instructive is it to find him, in the autobiography of his early days, written when he was thirty-seven years of age, warning every young person into whose hands it might fall, of the deep regret with which in his manhood he looked back upon the opportunities of learning, lost for ever, which he had neglected in his youth; confessing, that "through every part of his literary career he had felt himself pinched and hampered by his own ignorance," and asserting that he would at that moment have "gladly given one half the reputation which he had acquired, if by so doing he could rest the remainder upon a solid foundation of learning."

When about fifteen years of age he became apprenticed to his father, who was a writer to the signet, as the office is termed in Scotland; and although there must have been much that was repulsively dry and irksome to one of his vivid imagination in the forms and technicalities of the legal profession, he devoted himself to it with indefatigable assiduity; nor did he ever cease to make it his main pursuit in life, until he found that literature opened out to him a far more lucrative, as well as congenial, field of occupation. It was during professional excursions to the Highlands, and to other parts of Scotland, that he first became acquainted with the various scenes, and manners, and individuals which he afterwards so vividly portrayed.

After an early disappointment, Sir Walter Scott was happily married. His family consisted of two sons and two daughters, and lovelier pictures of domestic felicity are rarely to be met with than those which his biography affords. We see the father laying aside the pen in the midst of some striking portraiture of scenery or character, which was ere long to captivate the literary world into ecstasies of admiration, to smile upon or to join in the frolic pastimes of his little ones, who had at all times free access to his study, to take them upon his knee, to repeat for them a ballad, or relate to them a story—himself the greatest and the happiest child amongst them all; while dogs, who were his unfailing companions; a cat, which was wont to

sit demurely opposite his desk while he was employed in writing ; and a pig, which gambolled around him most uncouthly when he made his appearance out of doors, and insisted on one occasion, right or wrong, on accompanying him in a hunting party—all testified, by their mute love, to the overflowing affectionateness of a disposition which deemed nothing that God had made too mean or too insignificant to receive some portion of his kindly regard.

As wealth flowed in upon him in reality, or opened out in prospect, owing to his unexampled success as an author, he went on with more of zeal than prudence, literally adding house to house and field to field at his originally small and unpretending purchase at Abbotsford ; and there we find him, in the noon-tide of his fame, recreating himself from literary toil, during the vacations of the courts of law, with the rural avocations, particularly the planting and culture of trees, of which he was passionately fond. Here visitants of all ranks, and from all quarters—to-day the foreign prince, to-morrow the intrusive lion-hunter or penniless adventurer—flowed in upon him without intermission ; and the same ready welcome and unwearied hospitality awaited each and all. At this period of his life he also enjoyed an occasional visit to our great metropolis, where he was a welcome and favoured guest at the table of his sovereign, and where the highest in rank and station, and the most distinguished in literature and science, vied with each other to do him honour. These visits, however, always sent him back the same unspoiled, unsophisticated child of nature ; the same warm-hearted lover of home-faces and home-joys—utterly wearied, as he used to express it, of being "*lionized*." Nor did the offer of the poet-laureateship, which he gracefully declined, or that of the baronetcy, which he thankfully accepted, make the slightest alteration in his essentially cordial and unaffected demeanour.

Very brilliant is the home-picture which his biography presents at the close of the year 1824 and the commencement of 1825, when his fame would seem to have reached its culminating point, and when his grown-up children, and amongst them the bride of his newly-married eldest son, to whom he was most tenderly attached, together with a large circle of chosen friends and distinguished guests, were gathered around him, the buildings at Abbotsford completed, and its splendid suite of apartments for the first time brilliantly lighted and thrown open. But soon, alas ! how soon, over all this bright scene of rarely-attained felicity, the cold black shadow falls !

The bankruptcy, in the midst of the commercial troubles of 1826, of the bookselling firms of Hurst and Robinson, of Constable, and Ballantyne, with the latter of whom he had long been engaged in a partnership which involved him to the fullest extent in their liabilities, awoke him, as out of a bright, gorgeous dream of happiness, to the terrible reality that he was an utterly ruined man. Soon too, sadly soon, after this fell the bitter stroke that bereft him of the wife of his bosom, the cherished partner of his vanished happiness, who sank beneath the pressure of that sudden calamity of which she loved him too dearly to complain. Then came the toil of mind and pen, when heart and

hope were gone—the weary, thankless drudgery, the proceeds of which were the property of others, not his own—persevered in during early winter mornings with fingers cramped with rheumatism, and a head that ached and throbbed after many a tearful, sleepless night ! And then—how could it have been otherwise ?—there came full soon the great break-down of all !—mind and body altogether prostrated by rapidly recurring seizures of apoplectic paralysis. There were occasional rallies, like the fitful gleams from an expiring light, during one of which a noble ship of war was gracefully placed at his disposal by the British government, in the vain hope that a visit to a more genial clime might tend, at all events, to a prolongation of existence ; but it was not so ordained. A joyless voyage up the sunny waters of the Mediterranean—an unquiet yearning after home—a hurried return by forced journeys, cruelly overtaxing his small remaining strength—one dim, sad, dreamy, farewell look upon the lordly home which he had reared, the noble woods which he had planted, the murmuring river which so oft had borne burden to his song—and, on the 21st of September, 1832, at sixty-one years of age, the mighty minstrel breathed his last ; and on the 26th of the same month he was laid to rest, side by side with her who by six brief years had preceded him, in the beautiful ruins of Dryburgh Abbey.

In endeavouring, as we always should in the study of biography, to single out and to dwell upon those features of character which are specially worthy of our imitation, one of the most striking in the instance of Sir Walter Scott is that of unwearyed industry. In order fully to estimate this, we must remember that during the most active period of his literary career, while he was employed not only in feeding the hungry press with his own original and matchless conceptions, both in poetry and prose, but also in editing and writing biographies for voluminous editions of the most celebrated English authors, such as Dryden, Swift, and many others ; while he was literally overwhelmed with a multifarious correspondence, all of which—unless in the instance of some special and unavoidable exception—he made it a rule should be answered on the day in which the letters were received ; and while, at the same time, his literary position made it requisite for him to keep pace with, and to acquire a knowledge of, every work of importance which issued from the press, he was also daily occupied, for six months in the year, from nine or ten o'clock in the forenoon to a late hour in the afternoon, in the court-house of Edinburgh, at the laborious drudgery of the office of a clerk of the session. If it be inquired, as well it may, how did he possibly accomplish all this ? the answer is, that his whole life was one of incessant, indefatigable industry. His custom, during the busiest portion of his life, was to rise at five o'clock in the morning, to kindle his own fire, and, after a punctilious performance of the avocations of the toilet, he was seated at his desk, with all his papers and books of reference systematically arranged around him before six. Then, with the brief interruption of breakfast, he wrote or studied until ten, when he had to take his place in the court-house ; or, when in the country during the half-year's exemption from the duties of the court

of session, until eleven or twelve, or perhaps one o'clock; after which he was ready to join his guests or associates in the out-door recreations in which he took so much delight. In wet weather, the entire day was spent in his study. Besides this, he almost literally never knew an unoccupied moment; while at breakfast or at tea, a book, unless when guests were present, was almost always before him; and, even when conversing with any of the privileged few who had access to his study, his hands were unceasingly employed, either in folding or initialing letters or sorting books or papers. A singular instance is recorded of the complete mastery of the mind over the body which by such habits he had acquired. At one period of his life, he for some length of time suffered acute paroxysms of pain from cramp in the stomach; and it was while lying upon a sofa, and actually writhing with agony, altogether unable himself to put pen to paper, that he dictated to an amanuensis some of the most humorous and pathetic scenes and incidents in his works of fiction. Another remarkable feature in the character of Sir Walter Scott, as developed in his life, is that of sound practical common sense; the more worthy of notice, as the idea has been entertained that such is altogether incompatible with genius of the higher order, of which eccentricity has been regarded as an essential attribute. The utter absence, however, of anything eccentric, and the plain, matter-of-fact business habits of this the loftiest and most imaginative genius of his time, proves how utterly false and unfounded is this idea. A noble, self-sacrificing integrity forms another characteristic of this illustrious and highly-gifted man.

Mixed motives, one of the most prominent of which would seem to have been love for the school companions of his boyhood, led him to connect himself, from an early period in his literary career, with the printing and bookselling concerns of the brothers James and John Ballantyne—a most calamitous partnership for him; for when, in 1826, they failed, together with the houses of Hurst and Robinson of London, and Constable of Edinburgh, with whom he and they were connected, he found himself a debtor to the amount of some hundreds of thousands of pounds. But, as he looked upon the utter wreck of the fortune which he had realized, his noble declaration was, "*I will pay all; they shall lose nothing by me.*" And noble was his effort to fulfil it. With hopeless heart, and aching head, and failing sight, through days and months of bereavement and solitude, did he toil—toil for others with far greater assiduity than he had ever previously toiled for himself; so much so, that the almost incredible result of his exertions, to his creditors, between January 1826 and January 1828, a period of two short years, was very nearly forty thousand pounds. The penalty for these gigantic efforts was, however, soon exacted. In 1830 came the first of those rapidly recurring attacks of paralysis, of which at an earlier period of life he had more than one premonition, and which, in two years after, brought on the fatal termination. Thus he died a martyr to his high-minded determination that none should lose by him.

Combined with many excellencies, there were however in his, as in every human character, some striking and mournful defects. Regarding him

merely with reference to this present life, he would seem to have been the victim of one great and ruinous mistake. Had he rested content with the fame and the station—and they were of the highest—which his achievements in literature, together with the successful pursuit of an honourable profession, could confer upon him, his earthly career had been in all probability far happier, and its close less clouded than it proved. But the strange, almost unaccountable perversity of the bias of his mind was this—that while far from being insensible to, he made comparatively little after all of, literary or professional renown, while he most sedulously desired and endeavoured to be celebrated with the comparatively paltry honour of being the possessor of an extensive estate—the founder of a wealthy and distinguished family—the head, in short, of a clan like those of whom he wrote—of being, in a word, Sir Walter Scott of Abbotsford. Surely, in this, there is a melancholy instance of the obliquity of even the most gigantic mind when not primarily directed towards and governed by Him without whom the world's best wisdom, even as such, is utter folly—a proof of how, in such case, the heart's purpose, like the arrow from an ill-strung bow, strays altogether wide, not only of the object at which it ought to have been aimed, but also of that at which it would seem to have been actually directed. For utterly, in this respect, has his life's object failed. The fame which he did not seek, at least did not primarily seek, he has achieved: while the stranger's footfall echoes sadly through the halls of Abbotsford; the grave amidst the ruined cloisters at Dryburgh is scarcely more mournful to look upon: and the family which he was to have founded, within a few brief years after his death, has become extinct. The two childless sons and orphaned daughters, each in the prime of life, soon followed the fond, proud father to the tomb. "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, all is vanity!"

The great vital defect, however, in the character of Sir Walter Scott, as exemplified in his biography, would seem to have been the absence of personal, influential religion. He knew indeed and respected the truths of the gospel; he was strict in his own attendance, and in requiring that of his family, upon the public ordinance of sabbath worship; and his desire, during his last illness, for the reading to him of the word of God, and his apparent appreciation of its contents, leave us (though it is an awful thing to risk the interests of eternity on such a slender issue) not without a hope that he may have been savingly impressed by them before he passed into the world of spirits. The nature of his illness afforded, however, but little opportunity for evidence of his actual state of mind; and during life and health, we look, alas! in vain for any proof of that habitual realization of the hopes and prospects of eternity which supplies its possessors with the motives and affections of a new and a better state of being. Had he been through life possessed of such, we cannot doubt but that its course would have been far happier, its close less clouded, than it proved. Tribulation, bankruptcy, bereavement he might have experienced; but, amidst them all, he would have possessed the peace which the world cannot take away—the joy with which the stranger may not intermeddle; while his dying bed would

have been illumined with a light, and his memory encircled with a glory, such as genius, integrity, and amiability, however rare and excellent, are utterly inadequate to bestow.

LESSONS FROM CHINA.

THE following interesting stanzas are copied from a tract entitled, "Ode for Youth," circulated by the Chinese insurgents.

ON REVERENCE FOR JESUS.

Jesus, God's first-born Son,
Was in former times sent by God ;
He willingly gave his life to redeem us from sin ;
Of a truth his merits are pre-eminent.
His cross was hard to bear ;
The sorrowing clouds obscured the sun.
The adorable Son, the honoured of heaven,
Died for the children of men.
After his resurrection he ascended to heaven ;
Resplendent in glory, he wields authority supreme.
In him we know that we may trust,
To secure salvation and ascend to heaven.

ON THE HONOUR DUE TO PARENTS.

As grain is stored against a day of need,
So men bring up children to tend their old age.
A filial son begets filial children ;
The recompense here is truly wonderful.
Do you ask how this our body
Is to attain to length of years ?
Keep the fifth commandment, we say,
And honour and emolument will descend upon you.

ON THE DUTIES OF FAMILIES.

The members of one family being intimately related
They should live in joy and harmony.
When the feeling of concord unites the whole,
Blessings will descend upon them from above.

ON THE DUTIES OF A FATHER.

When the main beam is straight, the joists will be
regular ;
When a father is strict, his duty will be fulfilled :
Let him not provoke his children to wrath,
And a delightful harmony will pervade the dwelling.

ON THE DUTIES OF A MOTHER.

Ye mothers ! beware of partiality ;
But tenderly instruct your children in virtue.
When you are fit example to your daughters
The happy feeling will reach to the clouds.

ON THE DUTIES OF SONS.

Sons ! be patterns to your wives,
Consider obedience to parents the chief duty ;
Do not listen to the tattle of women,
And you will not be estranged from your own flesh.

ON THE DUTIES OF DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW.

Ye that are espoused into other families,
Be gentle and yielding, and your duty is fulfilled.
Do not quarrel with your sisters-in-law,
And thereby vex the old father and mother.

ON THE DUTIES OF ELDER BROTHERS.

Elder brothers ! instruct your juniors ;
Remember well your common parentage.
Should they commit a trifling fault,
Bear with it and treat them indulgently.

ON THE DUTIES OF YOUNGER BROTHERS.

Disparity in years is ordained by heaven ;
Duty to seniors consists in respect.
When younger brothers obey heaven's dictates,
Happiness and honour will be their portion.

ON THE DUTIES OF ELDER SISTERS.

Elder sisters ! instruct your younger sisters ,
Study improvement, and fit yourselves for heaven.
Should you occasionally visit your former homes,
Get the little ones around you, and tell them what is
right.

ON THE DUTIES OF YOUNGER SISTERS.

Girls ! obey your elder brothers and sisters,
Be obliging and avoid arrogance ;
Carefully give yourselves to self-improvement,
And mind and keep the ten commandments.

ON THE DUTIES OF HUSBANDS.

Unbending firmness is natural to the man ;
Love for a wife should be qualified by prudence ;
And should the lioness roar,
Let not terror fill the mind.

ON THE DUTIES OF WIVES.

Women ! be obedient to your three male relatives,
And do not disobey your lords.
When hens crow in the morning,
Sorrow may be expected in the family.

ON THE DUTIES OF THE MALE SEX.

Let every man have his own partner,
And maintain the duties of the human relations ;
Firm and unbending, his duties lie from home :
But he should avoid such things as cause suspicion.

ON THE DUTIES OF THE FEMALE SEX.

The duty of woman is to maintain chastity ;
She should shun proximity to the other sex.
Sober and decorous, she should keep at home ;
Thus she can secure happiness and felicity.

ON MANAGING THE HEART.

For the purpose of controlling the whole body,
God has given to man an intelligent mind.
When the heart is correct, it becomes the true regulator,
To which the senses and members are all obedient.

ON MANAGING THE EYES.

The various corruptions first delude the eye ;
But, if the eye be correct, all evil will be avoided.
Let the pupil of the eye be sternly fixed,
And the light of the body will shine up to heaven.

ON MANAGING THE EAR.

Whatever sounds assail my ear,
Let me listen to all in silence ;
Deaf to the entrance of evil,
Pervious to good, in order to be eminently intelligent.

ON MANAGING THE MOUTH.

The tongue is a prolific source of evil,
And a multitude of words leads to mischief.
Let me not be defiled by lying and corrupt discourse ;
Careful and cautious, let reason be my guide.

ON MANAGING THE HAND.

To cut off the hand whereby we are dragged to evil
Appears a determination worthy of high praise.
The duty of the hand is to manifest respect ;
But for improper objects move not a finger.

ON MANAGING THE FEET.

Let the feet walk in the path of rectitude,
And ever follow it, without treading awry ;
For the countless by-paths of life
Lead only to mischief in the end.

Varieties.

WINDFALL.—The origin of this term is said to be the following:—Some of the nobility of England, by the tenure of their estates, were forbidden felling any of the trees upon them, the timber being reserved for the use of the royal navy. Such trees as fell without cutting were the property of the occupant. A tornado, therefore, was quite a joyful event to those who had occupancy of extensive forests; and the *windfall* was sometimes of very great value.

ROBBING PETER TO PAY PAUL.—In the time of Edward VI much of the lands of St. Peter, at Westminster, were seized by his majesty's ministers and courtiers; but, in order to reconcile the people to that robbery, they allowed a portion of the lands to be appropriated towards the repairs of St. Paul's church: hence the phrase, "robbing Peter to pay Paul."

BANKRUPT.—Few words have so remarkable a history as the familiar word "bankrupt." The money-changers of Italy had, it is said, benches or stalls in the bourse or exchange in former times, and at these they conducted their ordinary business. When any of them fell back in the world and became insolvent, his bench was broken, and the name of broken bench, or *banco rotto*, was given to him. When the word was adopted into English it was nearer the Italian than it now is, being "bankerout," instead of bankrupt.

HOBSON'S CHOICE.—This expression is proverbial both in Europe and America. Its origin is said to have been as follows:—Thomas Hobson was a celebrated carrier at Cambridge, who, to his employment in that capacity, added the profession of supplying the students at college with horses. In doing this, he made it an unalterable rule that every horse should have an equal portion of time in which to rest as well as labour; and he always refused to let a horse out of his turn. Hence the saying, "Hobson's choice; this or none."

A FEATHER IN HIS CAP.—Among the ancient warriors it was customary to honour such of their followers as distinguished themselves in battle, by presenting them with a feather to wear in their caps, which, when not in armour, was the coverings of their heads, and no one was permitted that privilege who had not at least "killed his man." The memory of this old compliment is yet retained among us by the customary saying, when any person has effected a meritorious action, that it will be "a feather in his cap."

STERLING MONEY.—During the reign of Richard I, money which was coined in the eastern part of Germany, became of great demand, on account of its purity. The inhabitants of that portion of country where this pure coin was made were called Easterlings; hence the name Easterling Money was applied to the coin brought from that region. Soon afterward, some of the Easterlings who were skilled in coining were sent to London, in order to bring the process of coining to a state of perfection there. This was accomplished, and the English coin took the name of *Sterling Money*, which it retains to the present time.

ENIGMATICAL INSCRIPTION AT PERSEPOLIS.—The following is said to be the translation of an inscription found at the ruins of Persepolis, in Persia. It consists of five maxims. Carried into practice, we think them an antidote against extremes, deception, and extravagance.

NEVER	ALL	FOR HE WHO	EVERY THING	OFTEN	MORE THAN
TELL	YOU MAY KNOW	TELLS	HE KNOWS	TELLS	HE KNOWS
ATTEMPT	YOU CAN DO	ATTEMPTS	HE CAN DO	ATTEMPTS	HE CAN DO
BELIEVE	YOU MAY HEAR	BELIEVES	HE HEARS	BELIEVES	HE HEARS
LAY OUT	YOU CAN AFFORD	LAYS OUT	HE CAN AFFORD	LAYS OUT	HE CAN AFFORD
DECIDE UPON	YOU MAY SEE	DECIDES UPON	HE SEES	DECIDES UPON	HE SEES

HISTORY IN WORDS.—The history of words is the history of trade and commerce. Our very apparel is a dictionary. We are told of the "bayonet," that it was first made at Bayonne; "cambrics," that they came from Cambray; "damask," from Damascus; "arras," from a city of the same name; "cordwines" or "cordovan," from Cordova; "currants," from Corinth; the "guinea," that it was originally coined of gold brought from the African coast so called; "camlet," that it was woven, at least in part, of camels' hair. Such has been the manufacturing progress, that we now and then send calicoes and muslins to India and the East; and yet the words give standing witness that we once imported them from thence, for "calico" is from Calcut, and "muslin" from Mousul, a city in Asiatic Turkey.

WEATHER SAYINGS.—The following are some of the couplet-sayings relating to the weather, which are common in this country:—

"An evening red and next morning gray
Are sure signs of a beautiful day."

"If the moon shows a silver shield,
Be not afraid to reap your field."

"If the cock goes crowing to bed,
He will rise with a watery head."

"When the peacock loudly bawls,
We shall soon have rain and squalls."

"When the glow-worm lights her lamp,
Surely then the air is damp."

"A rainbow in the morning
Gives the traveller warning.
But a rainbow at night
Is the traveller's delight."

BOOK-BORROWING.—We remember, when a schoolboy, a practice in our school of writing on the fly-leaves of books some caution to those who might chance to borrow them. One of those commenced with, "Steal not this book," etc. That inscription never appeared to us as possessing much sense; but the following we would commend to the attention of all book-borrowers:—

"If thou art borrowed by a friend,
Right welcome shall he be
To read, to study, not to lend,
But to return to me."

"Not that imparted knowledge doth
Diminish learning's store;
But books, I find, if often lent,
Return to me no more."

"Read slowly, pause frequently, think seriously,
Keep cleanly, return duly,
With the corners of the leaves not turned down."